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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
  
Plaintiff,  
  
v.  
  
ERIK D. MENDOZA-CONTRERAS,  
  
Defendant.

CASE NO. 1:22-CR-00074-JLT-SKO

STIPULATION REGARDING EXCLUDABLE  
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;  
FINDINGS AND ORDER

DATE: November 16, 2022  
TIME: 1:00 p.m.  
COURT: Hon. Sheila K. Oberto

This case is set for status on November 16, 2022. On May 13, 2020, this Court issued General Order 618, which suspends all jury trials in the Eastern District of California “until further notice.” Under General Order 618, a judge “may exercise his or her authority to continue matters, excluding time under the Speedy Trial Act with reference to the court’s prior General Order 611 issued on March 17, 2020 . . . with additional findings to support the exclusion in the Judge’s discretion.” General Order 618, ¶ 6 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2020). In addition, any judge “may order case-by-case exceptions” to General Order 618’s provisions “at the discretion of that Judge or upon the request of counsel, after consultation with counsel and the Clerk of the Court to the extent such an order will impact court staff and operations.” General Order 618, ¶ 7 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2020). This and previous General Orders were entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19.

Although the General Orders address the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision “counteract[s] substantive openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record findings” in a particular case.

1 *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no  
 2 exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at  
 3 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a  
 4 judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally  
 5 or in writing”).

6 Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory  
 7 and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, and 618 require specific supplementation. Ends-of-  
 8 justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of his  
 9 findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and  
 10 the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable  
 11 unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that  
 12 the ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public  
 13 and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

14 The General Orders exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code  
 15 T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics,  
 16 natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such  
 17 circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance  
 18 following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court  
 19 recognized that the eruption created “appreciable difficulty” for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-69; *see*  
 20 *also United States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time  
 21 following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency).

22 The coronavirus poses a similar, albeit more enduring, “appreciable difficulty” to the prompt  
 23 proceedings mandated by the statutory rules. Recently, the Ninth Circuit enumerated a “non-  
 24 exhaustive” list of seven factors it found to be “relevant” in considering ends-of-justice Speedy Trial Act  
 25 continuances “in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.” *United States v. Olsen*, --- F.3d ---, 2021 WL  
 26 1589359 at \*7 (9th Cir. Apr. 23, 2021). That non-exhaustive list includes: (1) whether a defendant is  
 27 detained pending trial; (2) how long a defendant has been detained; (3) whether a defendant has invoked  
 28 speedy trial rights since the case’s inception; (4) whether a defendant, if detained, belongs to a

1 population that is particularly susceptible to complications if infected with the virus; (5) the seriousness  
2 of the charges a defendant faces, and in particular whether the defendant is accused of violent crimes;  
3 (6) whether there is a reason to suspect recidivism if the charges against the defendant are dismissed;  
4 and (7) whether the district court has the ability to safely conduct a trial. *Id.*

5 In light of the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding  
6 excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-justice exception, § 3161(h)(7)  
7 (Local Code T4). If continued, this Court should designate a new date for the status conference. *United*  
8 *States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any pretrial continuance must be  
9 “specifically limited in time”).

### 10 STIPULATION

11 Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendants, by and  
12 through their counsel, hereby stipulate as follows:

13 1. By previous order, this matter was set for status on November 16, 2022.

14 2. By this stipulation, defendants now move to continue the status conference until March  
15 15, 2023, and to exclude time between November 16, 2022, and March 15, 2023, under 18 U.S.C.  
16 §§ 3161(h)(7)(A) and 3161(h)(7)(B)(i) and (iv).

17 3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

18 a) The government has represented that the discovery associated with this case  
19 includes investigative reports and related documents in electronic form, videos, photographs, and  
20 digital evidence. The government provided initial discovery and supplemental discovery. On  
21 September 26, 2022, the government produced a second batch of supplemental discovery.

22 b) Counsel for defendant desires additional time to review discovery, consult with  
23 his client, discuss potential resolutions with his client, and otherwise prepare for trial.

24 c) Counsel for defendant believes that failure to grant the above-requested  
25 continuance would deny him the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into  
26 account the exercise of due diligence.

27 d) The government does not object to the continuance.

28 e) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the

case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendants in a trial within the original date prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

f) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161, et seq., within which trial must commence, the time period of November 16, 2022 to March 15, 2023, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(i) and (iv) because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis of the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendants in a speedy trial.

4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial must commence.

IT IS SO STIPULATED.

Dated: November 14, 2022

PHILLIP A. TALBERT  
United States Attorney

/s/ Antonio J. Pataca  
ANTONIO J. PATACA  
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: November 14, 2022

/s/ Nicholas Reyes  
NICHOLAS REYES  
Counsel for Defendant  
Erik D. Mendoza-Contreras

**ORDER**

IT IS SO ORDERED that the status conference is continued from November 16, 2022, to **March 15, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. before Magistrate Judge Sheila K. Oberto.** Time is excluded pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(i) and (iv).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: **November 14, 2022**

/s/ *Barbara A. McAuliffe*  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE